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FIVE SPEECHES

ON THE

LIQUOR TRAFFIC,

DELIVERED SINCE THE SESSION,

BY

GEORGE OTTO TREVELYAN,

M.P. FOR THE BORDER BURGHS.

“ Instead of ordering men to rise above their circumstances, which few can or will do, political philosophy seeks to alter the circumstances, and through them affect the men, by preventing any from being exposed to temptations beyond their strength.”

DEDICATED BY PERMISSION TO THE RT. HON. JOHN BRIGHT, M.P.

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1872.

THESE speeches are dedicated to the Right Hon. John Bright, by his permission—a permission which implies nothing more than sympathy with any honest attempt to bring political influences to bear upon that national evil against which he did vigorous and early battle. Nor is it possible to place on more permanent record what has been spoken from the platform without acknowledging a debt to the statesman who, by his example, has shown all who believe that they have a righteous object how to appeal widely and fearlessly to the convictions of their fellow countrymen ; and who, (by those constitutional reforms which, thanks to him, have been secured within the last few years, or are now on the eve of accomplishment,) has brought it about that such an appeal shall produce far more prompt and decisive results than formerly upon our legislative action. Others but plant and water the ground which has been cleared by his labours of thirty arduous years ; and all that we can do to express our gratitude is to resolve that we will employ the method which he has taught us in behalf of no cause about which we are afraid to pray that God will give the increase.

Every one in the three kingdoms, who thinks or feels, is agreed that something must be done, and that soon. The movement in furtherance of which these speeches were made, (a movement which has evoked, among the classes to whom the question comes most nearly home, an interest and an enthusiasm at once striking and pathetic,) will have done something to ensure that, whatever step is taken, it shall be a bold and straightforward one in the right direction. A Government which proposes to suppress, without delay, a large proportion of the existing public houses, will have at its back the great majority of our working men, and the best

nineteen-twentieths of the Temperance party ; for that party knows well, from its experience in the United States, and in our own colonies, that, the less a nation drinks, the more rapidly its opinion shapes itself into a determination that the temptation to drunkenness shall disappear from its borders. As for "vested rights," (if such rights can exist in the teeth of an express legal declaration that they are granted only for a year,) it is to be presumed that, when the exclusive privilege of selling an article is restricted from a larger to a smaller number of monopolists, those who remain in the enjoyment of it can contrive and afford to buy out their competitors. The business which the people at large have in the matter is to insist that a complicated machinery for compensation by means of a license tax shall not admit of being turned into a cover for postponing the extinction of drink-shops. It is earnestly to be hoped that, in dealing with the liquor traffic, the minister will take counsel, not with those who have a private interest in its maintenance, but with those who have nothing beyond a public interest in the morality and the welfare of the entire community.



SPEECH DELIVERED AT BRADFORD,

IN ST. GEORGE'S HALL,

NOVEMBER 14TH, 1871,

ALFRED ILLINGWORTH, ESQ., M.P., IN THE CHAIR.

Mr. Chairman, though, like all who love to speak their mind in the presence of men who have a mind of their own, I am glad to find myself face to face with a Bradford audience; still it is with especial satisfaction that I appear before you for the first time on an occasion worthy of a town which has done, is doing, and with God's help will yet do something notable for human freedom and human amelioration. We have heard a great deal at a distance about the Bradford people. We have been told that you are a community which regards public action not as a trade or a pastime, but as a duty which all good citizens should undertake in common, and for the right performance of which they are responsible to no one but their conscience. We are told that you do not place any great faith in the propriety of letting well alone, or in the impossibility of making men virtuous by Act of Parliament, or other such commonplaces of cynicism and self-interest. And, therefore, taking it for granted that every one present, speakers and hearers alike, hold that their tongues and votes have been given them for the service of their fellow-countrymen—believing that this great multitude is a lodge of brethren bound together by the principle that politics were made for man, and not man for politics—we will try to consider whether there is any necessity in the nature of things that public life must for ever be a struggle for place and power in which the people at large have little influence or interest: whether there does not exist some measure which, if obtained, would make you and your children happier and wiser, with better outlooks both in this world and the next; and whether, if such a measure be within the range of possibility, it is not incumbent on us as citizens, as fathers, and as Christians, to lay aside party prepossessions and sectarian prejudices, and band ourselves with a determination never to break our ranks in pursuit of any object, however specious, however inviting, until we have placed that measure upon the statute-book of the United Kingdom.

I have found on previous occasions that popular assemblies are quite as ready for figures of arithmetic as for figures of speech ; and, therefore, I will not hesitate to read you a few statistics : not of the usual nature, how our exports and imports have increased during the last ten years, and how every twelvemonth we buy so many more pounds of cotton, and sell so many more yards of calico : but some statistics which display the reverse of the picture, and show what a price we pay for this superficial appearance of splendid prosperity. Our poor-rates have increased from one million seven hundred thousand pounds a year a century ago, to eleven million seven hundred thousand in 1869 ; so that, with a population only two and a-half times as large as in the last century, seven times as much is paid for pauperism : and that, though our national income is at least six times what it was then. I was heartily ashamed when travelling in Switzerland last summer to see it stated in a German guide-book, written with the accuracy which German authors so successfully cultivate, that, while in Switzerland only one person in twenty was dependent on his neighbours, in England one in eight was so dependent. We have a daily list of a million and a quarter of paupers, and one hundred and forty thousand criminals constantly in jail—criminals who cost the country nearer four than three millions annually. Think of these statistics, and of what lies behind them. Reflect how many ruined homes, how many desolated careers, how much misery struggling on the verge of disaster these wretched figures represent ! And what has brought us to this plight ? The causes are four : poverty, crime, ignorance, and irreligion. And what is in its turn the principal cause of these four evils ? When we have discovered the primal source and feeder of all this beggary and vice, if we delay to apply a remedy, in order that we may go on squabbling over party differences and turning each other in and out on denominational questions, we shall resemble nothing so much as a crew, who, when a leak had been sprung and the sea was flowing in, instead of rushing to the pumps and rigging a jury plate over the hole, should fall to quarrelling about the boatswain's religion, or the colour of the signal that flies at the masthead.

The main cause of our pauperism is that we support 98,000 licensed victuallers, 52,000 licensed beershops, and 35,000 other licensed dealers in strong liquor. In Preston 28 working men club to keep one alehouse ; in Blackburn 25. A careful analysis made in 40 towns in Scotland has ascertained that while 981 persons have their baker, 1,067 their butcher, and 2,281 their bookseller, every 149 have their dramshop. Mr. Bass himself would hardly maintain that liquor was more than seven times as important to human sustenance as beef and mutton, and more than fifteen times as important to human virtue and intelligence as

books and knowledge. You are probably aware of the immense service done by the Convocation of our southern province in calling for evidence from clergy, recorders, governors and chaplains of prisons, chief-constables, coroners, superintendents of lunatic asylums, governors of workhouses, and superintendents of police. That evidence is of one complexion. "I can trace," says one clergyman, "nearly every case of family destitution to intemperance." "There would be no real poverty here," says another, "except from some illness, if there were no drunkenness." As to the governors of workhouses, I will take their answers to the question as to the proportion of paupers who are victims of intemperance exactly in the order in which I find them printed. "Twelve years experience—two-thirds." "80 per cent may be given as the proportion of paupers who are the victims of intemperance." "I should say that three-fourths of the inmates of this house have been the victims of intemperance." "Without hesitation I should say that 70 or 80 per cent of the paupers come to that state through drink." And so it goes on: "75 per cent," "80 out of every 100," "three-fourths," "80 per cent," in terms that very soon range themselves into a grim tautology. "I have been master of workhouse and relieving officer for eleven years," says one witness, "and during that time I never knew a teetotaller applying for parish relief." Another says: "Among the upwards of 170 men and women in this house, there is not one teetotaller to be found." Where else could we look for such a phenomenon, except perhaps in a gaol, or on the staff of the *London Morning Advertiser*? A town councillor of Edinburgh says: "I lived eight years in a population where there was no public-house. There were no poor-rates in the parish then. Now there are five public-houses, and a poor-rate of 1s. 8d. in the pound." And is Mr. Bass to sneer at paid agents, and tell you that you are not to do something to keep in his useful career a man who would have risen to the top of any open profession whatsoever? Mr. Bass, who is paid by the people of England not only in brewer's bills, but in poor-rates, in police-rates, in four-fifths of the salary of every judge, policeman, and relieving officer in the kingdom.

As regards crime, one recorder tells us that thirty-three years' experience has taught him that two-thirds of it comes from drink. Another that nine-tenths of criminal convictions can directly or indirectly be traced to the same cause. Chaplains and governors of gaols are unanimous in the same direction. "After an experience of eighteen years as chaplain, I am convinced that at least 75 per cent of those who are committed owe it to intemperance in some shape or other." "We consider that nearly three-fourths of the prisoners in this gaol have been the victims of intemperance." "As the result of a close attention to the state and condition of

over 50,000 prisoners, male and female, whom I have seen in nineteen years, over 75 per cent certain." "I never remember one teetotaler committed to prison." "To the best of my knowledge, during twenty-eight years of official life I have never had a total abstainer in custody." "About 75 per cent," says a superintendent of police. "It brings the victims and their families to poverty and want, and then crime follows." In short, it cannot be doubted that the English crime which is punishable by law comes in vast proportions from that English sin which up to within a few years past the law itself, for fiscal purposes, did not scruple to foster and promote.

Drink, too, is the fruitful parent of ignorance. "I have known many instances," says a clergyman, "where children are not sent to school through the parents spending the money in drink." "Education," says another, "is more hindered by drinking usages and habits than by all other causes put together." A Chief Constable tells us that "an average of 2s. a head per week from the wages of labour, in excess of what is required to maintain health and strength, goes to the beershop or public house. The result is felt in diminished food, clothing, and comfort in the cottage, and inability to send the elder children to school after twelve years of age." Here you have the reason why every previous Parliament has been indifferent to this question. If clerks in Government offices were to spend a hundred a year out of four hundred on beer and spirits: if in consequence of the size of the father's wine bill the children of clergymen and solicitors were sent to earn their bread prematurely, or turned loose to run about the streets, instead of being left at school to learn how to live and govern themselves, a middle class House of Commons would never have sat with folded arms waiting till the Reform Bill of 1867 brought the people in to have their word in the matter. You in Bradford have the reputation of knowing a great deal about education; but all your schools, denominational, undenominational, and secular together, set up, though they may be, by the grace of God, will not do so much to teach virtue and enlightenment, as is done for the teaching of sin and self-indulgence by the schools set up in every parish by the brewer and distiller under quite different auspices.

And, finally, what is one chief cause of irreligion in this country? Let us seek a response from the Church of England. That Committee, which Convocation, to its high honour, instructed to report upon this question, distinctly affirms that "no evil more injuriously counteracts the spiritual work of the Church than the vice of intemperance." And this conclusion is amply borne out by the evidence of individual clergymen. Recollect who these witnesses are. They are not itinerant philanthropists. They are not political agitators. They are not fanatics. They are men who have a profession to which they are, perhaps, more intensely

attached and devoted than any professional people whatsoever. They are members of a religious body which (I say it without prejudice) is second to only one of our great denominations in ascribing supreme importance to the maintaining and exercising a special form of worship and doctrine; and when you find a clergyman saying that religion is powerless as an instrument for good on account of some particular obstacle, you must give him credit, as you give credit to thorough-going politicians like Sir Wilfrid Lawson and myself, when we tell you that Liberal politics of the ordinary type are beginning to be useless to the country on account of this all-pervading vice, and that you must put down drink if you want men to be Liberals, just as the clergy tell you that you must put it down if you want them to be Christians.

We find one clergyman very frankly owning that "neither the Church of England nor the Church of Scotland has yet done anything worthy of its position and influence. The Christian public must be roused to self-denial and effort for the lessening of the evil." And so it is. Whatever religious body, acting in the spirit of that Master who bade us pray that we should be delivered from temptation, and thinking little of false respectability, and very much of saving those that perish, shall first dare to identify itself with this great reformation,—that religious body, be it ever so poor and so obscure in its origin, will in the end be the Church of the people. We are told that drink has the divine sanction, and evangelists and apostles are quoted side by side with the *Saturday Review* and Mr. Leone Levi. My firm belief is that, if St. Paul were to come on earth again, Mr. Bass would try to induce him to write a pamphlet for the purpose of commending the trade in the eyes of the evangelical party. But let them not rely too much upon texts from Leviticus and Exodus, and upon recommendations to drink a little wine for health's sake. The blood of the American martyrs who died for the emancipation of the negro is not yet so dry that men can forget how that very party in America which is now quoting the Epistle of Timothy in defence of rum, a few years ago was quoting the Epistle of Philemon in defence of the Fugitive Slave Law. Although the brewers, by searching the Scriptures with questionable diligence, may find here and there a text which appears to answer their purpose, you cannot open the Bible—it would not be the Bible if you could—without finding page after page full of exhortations to self-denial, self-control, and self-sacrifice. It was but the other day that, reading in Proverbs, I found this verse, "It is not for kings, O Lemuel, it is not for kings to drink wine, nor for princes to drink strong drink." To whom is that admonition now addressed? Who are the kings and princes of to-day? Since the Reform Bill of 1867 they are the working men of Great Britain. I cannot sit down from before a Brad-

ford audience without speaking to them a few words in the character, not of a temperance man, but of one who is a Radical from the core outwards. In that character I tell you that, the ballot once obtained—and you have as good as got it—there is nothing which your rulers are prepared to give you which has one-twentieth part the importance of this ; which will do one-twentieth as much to elevate the artisan, to make him powerful for good politically and socially, to win him respect in quarters where at present he is regarded with suspicion. How can you expect to have weight in public affairs as long as you are divided and dis-united, the cards of every juggler, and the pawns of every intriguer ? How can you hope that your representatives will do anything else but flatter you on the hustings and betray you in Parliament until you can join hand in hand from Dundee to Bristol in support of some measure that is really worth your pains ? Here is a measure ready to your grasp ; a question which is indeed the question of the people. The people lose everything that is to be lost by this traffic. They gain absolutely nothing that is to be gained. Take care that this state of things does not endure longer than next general election—the first at which your votes are free. The end of this movement is just. The means are legitimate and practical. The hour of trial is not far off. When that hour comes, may every man of us be found on the right side ! Then will come to pass what was written by the American Quaker poet about a question not more momentous than this :—

“The crisis presses on us, face to face with us it stands,
 With solemn lips of question, like the Sphinx in Egypt's sands.
 This day we fashion destiny ; our web of fate we spin.
 This day for ever choose we or holiness or sin.
 By the future which awaits us ; by all the hopes that cast
 Their faint and trembling beams across the blackness of the past ;
 And by the blessed thought of Him who for earth's freedom died,
 O my people, O my brothers, choose ye the righteous side !”

SPEECH DELIVERED AT BIRMINGHAM,
IN THE TOWN HALL,

NOVEMBER 21st, 1871,

MR. COUNCILLOR JOSEPH CHAMBERLAIN IN THE CHAIR.

Mr. Chairman.—We have now arrived at that period of the year which in political importance is second to none: those winter months that constitute what may fairly be described as the People's Session. As the popular element in our system gathers strength, greater significance attaches to these consultations and demonstrations; and wise statesmen are learning to estimate by the numbers and the tone of these meetings the amount of enthusiasm which their measures will excite, to carry them in safety through the difficulties and dangers of the ensuing spring and summer. And they have reason so to do: for an audience of this magnitude cannot be a packed assembly. You are not drawn hither by motives of ambition, or interest, or faction. You do not vote for or against resolutions because you have been obliged by a minister, or frightened by your constituents, or because you want a ship for your nephew or a living for your son, the curate. An audience like this is packed only in one sense: it is packed from floor to ceiling with men who know exactly what they want, and who are determined to let no consideration of party, sect, political gratitude for benefits past, political hope of favours to come, stand in the way of their getting it. It would be easy to eke out a speech by extracting statistics from the publications of Dr. Lees, Professor Kirk, and Mr. William Hoyle—gentlemen whose earnest and ceaseless labours have been of such inestimable service to this movement. But you do not want convincing that drink is a social, moral, and economic curse. The time for disquisition, as far as you are concerned, is passed. The time for action is at hand; and, in a free and constitutional country, action means politics—not the too-often questionable politics of a party, but the broader and nobler politics of a cause. It was not by shirking politics, and calling spades shovels, and treating with tenderness and reticence the leading statesmen of the day, that people who were bent upon administrative reform obtained the abolition of

purchase in the army. And, unless you are prepared to sacrifice all chance of doing some great thing for another generation, you must look the present aspect of public affairs boldly in the face. We have a Government which is too honest to confine itself to the ordinary and vulgar aim of staying in for the greatest possible number of years. It pursues the worthier ambition of dealing with a series of great questions; but it is to be feared that it sometimes lacks the courage to deal with them effectively. And herein lies a great danger. For men who want reform, and not the phantom of reform, it is better to have to do with foes who defend abuses tooth and nail than with friends who mask those abuses by trying ineffectually to deal with them. Half-hearted compliance deadens enthusiasm: opposition creates it, and in the end renders it irresistible. It is not too much to say that on the policy and conduct of the Temperance party during the next eighteen months depends the question whether Great Britain is or is not to be emancipated from the fetters of the liquor traffic. You are set down as visionary and unpractical, and you deserve the title as long as you shrink from asserting at the polling-booth the sentiments which you cheer when uttered from the platform. How can you expect to be considered anything but unpractical when you allow yourselves to be trifled with; you who, with the Good Templars at your back, have the power, if you had the will, to turn every borough election in the island? We owe—and I am speaking for the moment to those who hold the same opinions as myself—we owe allegiance to a Liberal ministry; but that ministry in turn owes allegiance to the great principle which is the key-note of all Liberalism, the paramount and unlimited authority of popular control. I do not know why such a pother is made, in what is a political and social matter rather than one of property, about giving to the majority of the men who live on the soil a right which we already concede to the man who owns it. And therefore it is that I am here, in the capacity of one who is nothing if he is not an ardent and uncompromising Liberal, to urge upon you that the time has arrived when we should postpone everything to the task of wringing from Parliament the instant suppression by Imperial legislation of a vast proportion of the drinkshops of the entire country, supplemented by that which is the end and aim of all our exertions—the concession of your undoubted right to be yourselves the custodians of the morality, the prosperity, and the peace of your own streets and homesteads.

That this is not the moment for mincing matters is manifest from the recent declarations of the Home Secretary, who is, perhaps, the last of our public men to whom we should wish to be opposed, not so much on account of his kindness and courtesy, as of the respect which we all bear him for his conscientious and

straightforward character. Speaking to his constituents in Scotland, Mr. Bruce said that it was "impossible for any Government, taking a practical view of the subject, to bring forward a measure which would satisfy the extremists and the enthusiasts." Now we may leave a practical Government to take its own view of its own duties; but why, in the name of all the principles and maxims which our party has held sacred, is it impossible for a Liberal Government to commit to the majority of the ratepayers a power which they are quite ready to leave in the hands of magistrates who are its own nominees? The reason is simple. The impossibility lies in the strength of the liquor interest. There is no trouble which that interest is not prepared to take; no humiliation to which it is not willing to subject your Parliamentary representatives; no money which it will not cheerfully lavish in order to preserve the right of sweeping into its coffers a multitude of sums of three, five, or seven shillings a week, which but for it would spread happiness, enlightenment, and some little delicacy of life throughout a million households. Ministers and members who cannot see their way on this question allow that there are certain abuses which demand a remedy, and name as those abuses drunkenness and adulteration. Adulteration, the Alliance freely admits, is none of its business. With regard to drunkenness, that is only a part of the matter, though a very melancholy part. In talking and legislating as if the only, or the chief, interest which the working classes have in the licensing question was the suppression of open and scandalous inebriety, your rulers are, to use an ancient political simile, drawing a red herring across the scent. The sufferers by the drink traffic who are the most numerous and the most to be pitied are not the drunkards who reel in the streets, but the wives and children of the men who spend on self-indulgence one out of every three or four of their hard-earned shillings. I should like to see a parliamentary return of the proportion of their weekly wages which on a given Saturday evening the artisans of a given district took home to their good women. It must be an awful thought for a brewer or distiller who wishes to do his duty in his generation that his income is composed of an infinite number of petty sums of money which otherwise would have gone in providing the comforts and innocent luxuries of many humble homes.

There is only one method of meeting the formidable onset of the manufacturers and sellers of liquor. It is to fight them with their own tactics and their own weapons. What was the course adopted by the great free-traders of the last generation in order to rouse a dormant nation and convert a hostile Parliament? They wrote, they spoke, they poured forth their money, their time, their health, like water; they spared neither

themselves nor others in order that their question might become the question of the day. And, therefore, it was that, to parody the words of the great American orator, they turned the House of Commons into an Anti-Corn-Law League that paid its own expenses, and that they saw those newspapers which had scoffed at them as visionaries and demagogues laying their daily tribute of support and commendation of the free-trade cause on the breakfast table of every Briton. And your object is not less momentous than theirs; nor, in spite of the satirists, is it a whit less logical. Well-meaning people of those classes where the family does not suffer because the father's wine bill is large laugh at your so-called fanaticism; but working men, who know what a half-fed child looks like—who are accustomed to the sight of women waiting through the long Saturday evening at the door which they dare not enter to reclaim their husbands—they do not laugh. They do not tell you, as Mr. Bass told the licensed victuallers of Derbyshire, that the great bulk of the suffering undergone by mankind (including, I suppose, the family of the drunkard) arises not from over-drinking, but from over-eating: words which proved painfully how a bad trade blinds the eyes of a good and kindly man.

But the cause wants something more than sympathy—it wants votes. If the working men are true to themselves; if they are as staunch to their order as the liquor seller to his; if public spirit and pure religion have not ceased to be motives of action not less strong than self-interest, there can be no fear as to what will be the eventual issue of the conflict. Before the last Reform Bill, the rental of public-houses was so high that every licensed victualler in a borough had a vote, unless he was incapacitated by want of residence, or some other impediment. In boroughs that class gained nothing by the legislation of 1867. Household Suffrage, it may fairly be said, did not enfranchise a single publican. Who can count the number of those to whom it gave votes among the class whence their victims are drawn? Already the effects are seen in the division lists. That this is a matter in which the common people judge differently from those of the upper ranks is evident from the fact that, in the case of English counties, where the householder is still (in my opinion, most unjustly and inexcusably) deprived of the suffrage, eighteen members only voted or paired for the Permissive Bill, and seventy-six against it. Recollect then, when the next appeal is made to the country, that each of you is voting not only for his own wife and children, and for the quiet and decency of his own neighbourhood, but that he is likewise fulfilling the duty of a citizen in behalf of some poor peasant whose so-called representative is thinking only how he may please the malt-selling farmer or the beer-selling publican, while he need regard the opinion of the labourers no more than

that of the horses which they drive at the plough. It is a painful sight in a Christian land to see men, who as senators ought to have higher views than the mass of the community, rising in their place in Parliament to defend the practice of paying wages in intoxicating liquor: a machinery for the weekday preaching of debauchery and the most unnatural form of selfishness more effective than anything which the clergyman can do to counteract its influence from the pulpit on a Sunday. There is one incidental effect of your measure at which every true Liberal must rejoice. It would tend to increase the self-respect of the mass of our people by investing them with a fresh responsibility. Of all shortcomings in our legislation of 1870 none was more to be lamented than our having lost the opportunity of initiating the rural population in the task of self-government by imposing on them the election of local school boards. By demanding for the householder the right of deciding upon the liquor traffic of his district, you show that you do not share that distrust and contempt of your fellow-countrymen engaged in agriculture which still robs them of a voice in the affairs of their nation.

You have in Birmingham a school board whose reputation is beginning, I may say, to be almost world-wide. One member of that board (I hope he belongs to the majority) is a dealer in drink. I wonder whether he has read what the clergy of the province of Canterbury say about the effect of drink upon education. "My night school has failed," says one. "The men drink the children's schooling," says another. "I have known many instances where children are not sent to school through the parents spending the money on drink," is the experience of a third. When he is taking part in your very spirited debates about paying fees to denominational schools, does it ever occur to him that it might save trouble if he and his brother-tradesmen were to cease cajoling the school pence out of the pockets of the parents, and so enable them to pay the fees themselves? That would be a very simple solution to these controversial difficulties.

You are told that prohibition has failed in the United States, and especially permissive prohibition; and this in the teeth of the fact that, wherever a prohibitory law is supported by the public opinion of the district, (which is the meaning and essence of permissive legislation,) jails are empty, schools full, the taxation for pauperism and crime a fleabite; wherever the liquor trade is licensed or free the police and the relieving officers are busy, under the auspices of corrupt and costly municipal governments backed by a vile political tyranny. The experience of the United States is a signal example, first, of the tendency which a prohibitory law has to turn itself into a Permissive law, and, secondly, of the utter failure of regulation by licence, if we are not satisfied

with our own experience of nearer four centuries than three. You are told the exchequer cannot spare the £25,000,000 derived from the liquor traffic, as if a sober population which respected itself and its rulers would not cheerfully supply all that was needed to maintain a frugal and beneficent administration. It may indeed be doubted whether a people who paid their schoolmasters what they now pay their distillers would continue to support the sinecurists and semi-sinecurists who at present batten on the duties which you contribute for permission to have what should have been food turned into gin and whiskey. You are told that you are inventing a new species of tyranny—a fresh and unheard of interference with individual liberty—though the objectors themselves are perfectly aware that you are only desirous to confer upon the public which best knows its own wants and its own trials a power which, whether tyrannical or not, has for ages been exercised by a privileged and irresponsible few. You are told that you are destroying a valuable trade. It may be valuable to the few. It is not to the many. If twenty shillings are spent on blankets, eight go to the workman. If the same sum is spent on broadcloth, eleven shillings go to the workman; if on books, sixteen; if on strong drink, two. An artisan gets back in wages eight shillings, ten, or twelve when he buys a pound's worth of warmth, health, and comfort. He gets back only two when he purchases disease, dirt, dependence, debasement, and degeneracy.

The ablest journal which actively and persistently opposes our view, the *Edinburgh Scotsman*, charges us with making the whole question one between the publicans and the Temperance party. We accept that description of the situation; and, accepting it, we endeavour to make the Temperance party coincide with the majority of the nation. We aim at turning the thrifty, intelligent, and patriotic of our fellow-citizens into Alliance men and Good Templars, not perhaps in name, but in their votes at the next general election. There are many persons, and very honest ones too, who are uneasy at seeing so large a share of power in the hands of the working classes. The sure and only method for those classes to dissipate prejudice and to conciliate confidence and respect, is for them to unite over some great measure which is worth their pains, and will be of essential benefit not only to themselves, but to the entire community. They have been told in memorable words that the lower you go the more drunkenness you find. Let them show that you find a stronger determination that drunkenness shall cease out of the land. They have been credited by those who know them least with a turn for spoliation. This is a case not for robbing others, but for protecting their own little incomes from systematic confiscation. You have your

votes ; and, by the time you are called upon to use them next, you will be answerable for those votes to no one but your conscience. Let the first ballot-boxes used in this island be full to the brim with suffrages which will proclaim that the majority of our electors are determined no longer to commit to others the task of deciding whether they are or are not to be sacrificed for the benefit of that fraction of a class which lives in artificial affluence at the cost of the national degradation and sin.

SPEECH DELIVERED AT DUNDEE,
IN THE KINNAIRD HALL,

NOVEMBER 27TH, 1871,

THOMAS THORNTON, ESQ., SOLICITOR (CLERK TO THE POLICE
COMMISSIONERS) IN THE CHAIR.

Mr. Chairman,—He must be a very practised speaker who would not feel a little uneasiness on finding himself for the first time in the presence of so large a section of such a community as this; but, on the other hand, the least able and the least experienced may feel some encouragement from the consciousness that his reception depends very much upon himself, and that a member who tries to do his duty in Parliament finds himself at home in a town which is always ready to do its duty at the polling booth. No politician who holds that, in public as in private and commercial life, right is right and wrong wrong, can feel himself very much a stranger wherever, from Cornwall to Caithness, there is gathered together an assembly of men who regard political action as a machinery for increasing the sum of human happiness and human virtue, and who look upon a party not as a joint-stock company for the getting and keeping of office, but as an association banded together for the purpose of carrying into effect great measures, each of which shall embody a great principle. I do not need your cheers to tell me that such an assembly is before me. Sir Wilfrid Lawson and I are always anxious to get hold of the newest arguments going against our bill; and, if possible, we like these arguments to have a local flavour. We are in special luck to-night: as Admiral Erskine has within the few last days been telling the electors of the county of Stirling that the Permissive Bill is a measure which would be unjust to the poor man; and that it would not only be unjust, but superfluous, inasmuch as drunkenness has of late years considerably decreased. If the Permissive Bill is a question of the rich against the poor, how do you account for my honourable friend's minority having risen from 40 in the middle and upper-class Parliament of 1865 to 136 in the people's Parliament of 1871? If this is a question of rich against poor, how do you account for my honourable friend himself having been turned out

of his seat at Carlisle by the restricted constituency of 1865, and brought in at the head of the poll as soon as the working men had a voice in the matter? How do you account for the fact that when, on the occasion of a good-humoured challenge from his colleague, Sir Wilfrid instituted a house-to-house canvass not only of the Liberal voters, but of the entire constituency, there was a clear majority of 600 in favour of the Permissive Bill? But, in truth, that was a poor majority. In a particular district in Wales, out of 1,000 householders, all but 100 were actively in favour of the bill. At Bodmin, in Cornwall, 462 householders were in favour of the bill, 150 refused to take a side, and only 7 declared themselves positively against it.

And the indirect evidence of the feeling of the mass of the people is still more striking than the direct indication afforded by a canvass, however fairly and carefully conducted. The committee appointed by the Convocation of the province of Canterbury reports :

“Few, it may be believed, are cognisant of the fact—which has been elicited by the present inquiry—that there are at this time within the province of Canterbury upwards of one thousand parishes in which there is neither public-house nor beershop.”

Now, as you are well aware, the right of petition to the House of Commons is very extensively used. Whenever any measure that interests the people is to the front, the lobbies and the post office overflow with petitions; and never do the messengers pass between the table of the House and the door with so many bagfuls of paper and parchment as when the Permissive Bill is approaching discussion. From which of these thousand parishes in which the sale of drink has been suppressed, not by public opinion, but by the autocratic *ipse dixit* of the landlord of the soil, has there ever been sent to us a petition begging us to devise some measure by which the inhabitants may be enabled to get their glass of liquor? I have not heard of one such petition. But there have been plenty of another description. “We obtained information,” says a clergyman, “of a beerhouse being about to be opened in my parish. Every man signed a petition to the lord of the manor to withhold his consent. The lord of the manor of course acted with us, and we were saved from the impending curse.” Why “of course?” Because the lord of the manor was Lord Shaftesbury.

But we shall be told that men acquiesce in the rights over his own property enjoyed by the landed proprietor, but will resent the interference of a tyrannical majority. Never mind theory. What says experience? Speaking of a great popular gathering, the *Boston Telegraph* says: “We did not see a drunken man on the ground. This was owing to the fact that liquor was not sold. Two or three men attempted to sell, but were soon routed, and took to their

heels." So much for the people rioting against prohibition! At Hartford, in Connecticut, a city missionary says: "In my conversations with the poor, many of them say that the law must have come from Heaven. It is too good to have been framed by man." They were not far wrong. Everything that is good does come from Heaven; and the best of all legislators are they who are the medium for devising and advocating these laws which operate in conformity with the Divine will, by which we humbly believe them to be inspired. With these facts in our eyes, it is late in the day to be met with the absurd apothegm of robbing the poor man of his beer. People who have that saying often in their mouths are thinking not so much of the poor man's beer as of the rich man's hock. It is beginning to be understood by those whom it most concerns that the politicians who set up a dummy figure of a working man from behind which to fire arrows at Sir Wilfrid Lawson and Mr. Rylands, are great capitalists who dread being deprived of the means of buying up poorer people's votes, in order that they may defeat any legislation which will dock their questionable gains.

Admiral Erskine tells us that drunkenness has decreased. Really members of Parliament, before they undertake to legislate for their neighbours, should be a little more careful to pick up a few statistics for themselves. The convictions for drunkenness in 1866-7 were 100,357; in 1867-8, they were 111,465; in 1868-9, they were 122,310; in 1869-70, they were 131,870; and I have little doubt that in 1870-71 they will be something very like 140,000. But perhaps you will say that the magistrates have become sharper, and the police more faithful, and that therefore more people are convicted than formerly, though no more are guilty. Well; if the same rapidity of increase extends itself over the whole field of crime—if picking of pockets and stealing of turnips increase as fast as inebriety—there will be something to say for this point of view. I will take the criminal and miscellaneous returns of the Manchester police. You need not be afraid of trusting them. They were only published last month, and the Alliance has not had the time to cook them, even if it had the will. From these it appears that, while the general crime of Manchester has in the space of the last ten years doubled, the drunkenness has trebled. Drunken cases are more numerous, for the plain and simple reason that drinking has increased, is increasing, and will increase till we try to stop it by action, and not by talk. In the year 1861 every family of five persons in the United Kingdom drank 140 gallons of liquor, at a cost of £16. 3s. 4d. In the year 1869, as the result of ten years of free libraries, Sunday schools, and mechanics' institutes, every family of five persons drank 153 gallons of liquor, at a cost of £18. 6s. 0½d. The national bill for

drink has risen from 86 millions in 1860 to 113 millions in 1869. The revenue derived from drink has increased from 19 millions in 1861 to 25 millions in 1870. I wish that Admiral Erskine, and other members for Scotch counties and Scotch burghs, would read and ponder over those figures. Those are the sort of figures which cause Chancellors of the Exchequer to rejoice, and working men to hang their heads. What is the result of this vast expenditure? We have 140,000 criminals constantly in gaol, and last year 1,240,000 paupers received relief upon the same day. These are the facts which public men have to consider. What are the theories over which we politicians strive to outspcak and outreach each other compared with these terrible certainties? Would that half the trouble statesmen expend on gaining power, and the reputation for eloquence and wit, was diverted to the study of these phenomena, and the search for their cure. Here is our remedy, for want of a better. Our receipt is that Parliament should of itself make an enormous diminution in the number of liquor shops, of which there now is one to every 33 inhabited houses, and should place in your hands the power of altogether expelling the traffic from your own neighbourhood. We are told that we are fanatics with our remedy, and that moderate and cultivated men prefer to have recourse to others less extreme, but equally efficient.

The first on the list is sure to be education. How can education be an effectual safeguard, when we have the master of a workhouse saying: "During the last few months I have had a lawyer from the town, the editor of a country newspaper, a professor of music, and an organist of the parish church, once a guardian, all inmates of this house through drink." We know what has been the fate of some of our greatest poets, artists, and statesmen: how their health, their families, their career, their fame have been ruined by the same cause that brings into every workhouse and lunatic asylum three-fourths of its occupants. "Some of the best educated men are the most intemperate," we are told by a parish clergyman; and a recorder says, "If educated people did not drink as much as uneducated, I should say education would prevent intemperance; but, as they do, I can suggest nothing." And while education does not prevent drunkenness, drink most certainly hinders education. "My night-school has failed," says one clergyman, reporting to the Committee of Convocation. "The men drink the children's schooling," writes another. "I have tried several counteractives against the twenty drinking houses," says a third, "but none of them proved efficacious." A fourth has tried a reading room, "but with no success. No counteractions can stem the torrent of evil caused by the temptations of drink." In truth, how can education succeed when it has this terribly attractive competitor? You may as soon expect a young man to be

won over by a modest quiet girl, when he has a fine lady of rank flaunting in lace and ribbons, and paying him every possible attention.

And will religion meet this great evil? We will go for an answer not to Radical members of Parliament—not even to ministers of those sects which cling but little to religious forms—we will go to the most denominational of all denominations, with the exception of the Catholic, the Established Church of England. “Two-thirds of non-attendants on the ordinances of religion are indisposed by the influence of intemperance,” says one incumbent. “I speak clerically,” says another, “and maintain that intemperance undoes all we can do for the moral improvement of the parish.” “The gospel fails to meet the case,” writes a third. “They dare not face the pulpit.” And, in truth, though a brewer finds no difficulty in stepping from his vats and barrels into the committee-room of the Church Missionary Society, yet somehow the victims of the brewer do feel a little natural shame at going straight from the public-house into a place of worship. But we don’t need clergymen to tell us what we can learn for ourselves by turning to the best-thumbed passages of the Bible. We all know on what sort of ground the seed fell to most advantage. It was good ground. It was not ground harrowed by vice, and watered by daily showers of rum and brandy.

There is yet another remedy. We are urged to cure the evils of the country by emigration. Within the last eighteen months a dead set has been made at the Government in order to induce it to send emigrants to our colonies at the public expense; and I am glad that our ministers had the courage and good sense to see through the sham, and despise the violence, of that fictitious agitation. Instead of shipping our workmen abroad, we ought to examine into the causes which prevent their being comfortable at home; and, if we cannot ascertain and remove those causes, we may be Radicals, but we certainly are not philosophic Radicals. If one public-house stood where ten stand now, very little would be heard about State emigration. It was with other ideas and with higher aspirations than that of being allowed to leave the country in Government ships that our working men flocked to the poll at the election of 1868. In that year you at Dundee, and we in Hawick and Galashiels, were fighting the same fight, hoping the same hopes, and rejoicing over the same victory. We all of us firmly believed that a new era was dawning upon the country—an era of just and strong legislation, in which the interests of cliques should give place to the interests of the nation at large—an era when a series of measures tending to increase the morality and the welfare of the community should show beyond dispute that this country was at length beginning to be governed by the

people and for the people. In one respect we have not been disappointed. There is no doubt that Mr. Gladstone's Government has been just and strong beyond all former precedent. You will not accuse us of being time-serving politicians or of being flatterers of the ministry, when we say that there is something quite intolerable in that captious spirit which is blind to the services of a great man, and sharp-sighted only to his shortcomings. We who sit night after night on the benches of Parliament, and who walk day after day past the doors of the public offices, are very painfully aware of much that escapes the notice of you who watch the proceedings of public men through the enchantment of distance. But, on the other hand, that very proximity and that very intimate knowledge enable us to assure you that public spirit and public conscience have a most unmistakable influence on the counsels of this Cabinet. The ministry have shown a great deal of courage and firmness on occasions, but it so happens that they have been firm and courageous on matters which for the most part have not very materially concerned the moral and material prosperity of the community at large: if we except the Trades Union Bill, which was rather a tribute of respect and deference to the increased political strength of the working classes, than a solid addition to their comfort and well-being. It is impossible to overrate what Mr. Cardwell has done, what he is doing, and what, to judge of the future by the past and present, he will do. But, though the work he is now engaged in throws all previous administrative reform into the shade, on the other hand it must be allowed that the fact of the command of the army having been laid open to the nation at large comes home rather to the parsonage and the country house than to the workshop and the cottage. We are grateful to Earl Granville for having carried into our foreign policy the principles of Bright and Cobden. We cheerfully acknowledge that the Irish Land Bill was a great thing—for Ireland; and that the disestablishment of the Episcopal Church in the West Indies was an inestimable boon—for Jamaica. But the toilers in our manufactories, the dwellers in our alleys, the tillers of our soil, the innumerable rank and file of our social order—what have they got from the Reform Bill of 1867 and the election of 1868? They have got nothing except a vote. And for this state of things they cannot blame the Government. It had a long list of promised measures to work through. They cannot blame their representatives, whose votes and speeches are in the long run merely the expression of the national will. They have nobody to blame but themselves. The working men of this country will never even begin to have their due weight in the councils of the Cabinet—they will never cease to be the tools of every schemer and the customers of every charlatan—until they unite over some worthy

measure, and turn themselves into the motive power of some great movement which shall carry health, plenty, virtue, and happiness within their own doors and the doors of their neighbours. The old game has been going on for a long time, and will go on yet. Men bid for your votes ; they throw you over when they have got them. Every hustings resounds with pledges which are broken in every division list ; until at last it has come to the crowning absurdity of this " new departure," this " social movement," about which for months past the high-class newspapers have been writing in a tone that I am sure must make any working man who respects himself and his order blush for very shame. You will profit nothing by accepting the patronage of the most illustrious nobleman, or by lending yourselves to the machinations of the cleverest politician. If you are to effect anything worthy of note cease to rely on peers and wire-pullers ; rely on yourselves, and work out your own salvation. Make a resolution within your breasts, and keep it when the time comes, that you will support no candidate whatever who, from fear of the liquor interest or from distrust of the people, is afraid to commit to the majority of the people a power which he now very willingly commits to the landlord of the soil.

Do not be afraid about doing a little temporary harm to your own party. You may be sure of this : no party, whichever it may be, will profit in the end by an alliance with men whose political power and influence rests upon the national debasement and vice. You know who it was that said : " What fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness, and what communion hath light with darkness ? " You may owe allegiance to your party, but you owe a higher loyalty to the country of your birth. Do your duty by her. Do not flag in your efforts until you have obtained that great measure, compared with which all other reforms are but as dust in the balance ; and then, when the success of the movement is secured and the labours are accomplished, you will be able to address her in the words of the poet, and say :—

" Bow down, dear land, for thou hast found release !
 Thy God, in these distempered days,
 Hath taught thee the sure wisdom of His ways,
 And from thy shame and sin hath wrought thy peace.
 Bow down in prayer and praise !
 No poorest in thy borders but may now
 Lift to the juster skies a man's ennobled brow."

That is the consummation toward which our prayers and our toils are directed. May every one in this vast assembly have a hand in bringing it about, as assuredly either himself or his children will have a share in the blessings of which it will be the earnest, the precursor, and the cause !

SPEECH DELIVERED AT EDINBURGH,
IN THE MUSIC HALL,

NOVEMBER 28TH, 1871,

DUNCAN McLAREN, ESQ., M.P., IN THE CHAIR.

Mr. Chairman, Sir Wilfrid Lawson and myself did not need the cordial reception with which we have been honoured in order to be assured that this city would give a hearty welcome to men who come on the errand that has brought us here to-night. Your own vote, sir, and that of your colleague are sufficient guarantees that we need not appear before an Edinburgh audience with words of excuse on our lips, when our mission is to urge that the time has now arrived when all other political considerations should not be lost sight of, but should be subordinated to the task of obtaining for the people of this country the custody of the morality, the order, and the decency of their own neighbourhood. That is our object. That is the sum and substance of the boon which we entreat you to demand, and, if necessary, to wring from Parliament. It seems a simple and straightforward petition for a town returning two Liberal members to make of a House of Commons containing a Liberal majority led by a Liberal Government. But, in truth, before that petition can meet with success there is a great deal still to be done and suffered. So many interests, of unhallowed nature indeed, but of enormous value, are bound up with this question,—so many deeply-rooted prejudices,—so many cherished theories, habits, and associations,—that victory cannot be expected until after a battle of almost unprecedented difficulty and danger. I always dislike to hear temperance speakers congratulating themselves and their audiences on the great advance the question has made: how this minister has recognised their principle in a clause of his bill: how that noble lord has said a kind word for Permissive legislation: how there is a growing feeling that something must be done to mitigate the evils of drunkenness. There is nothing does so much harm as these premature demonstrations of thankfulness for very small mercies indeed. Those who are putting on their armour ought not to boast themselves like those who are putting it off. You, indeed, may well be deceived as to the obstacles which stand in your way. Scottish temperance reformers

may be forgiven for a little over-confidence when we remember the immense and consentaneous enthusiasm amidst which they exist. What was the proportion of votes that Scotland gave to Sir Wilfrid's bill? Twenty-four in favour and only fourteen against; and of those fourteen votes two belonged to Mr. Bruce and Mr. Grant Duff, who were members of the Government, and who, therefore, in Divisions of this description resemble an animal that flourishes in this climate in very great profusion, the faggot-voter. Leaving them out of the question, my hon. friend got two-thirds of the entire Scotch vote. Some people say that if you had the Permissive Bill no use would be made of it, owing to the impossibility of getting it adopted by two out of every three rate-payers. Why, the suffrages of the members of Parliament for Scotland, representing, as I am bound to suppose they do, two-thirds of the entire constituency, show that the bill would certainly be put into very general operation. Your spirits may well rise in such an atmosphere. You may well feel resolved to turn those two-thirds next session into four-fifths, and, if that fails, to demand a Permissive Bill of your own. We will call it by some pretty name that will not clash with Sir Wilfrid. We will call it a bill for the diminution of pauperism and crime in Scotland. But, though in Scotland we are strong and confident, on the other side of the border things are in a very different state. There voters are dubious,—representatives timid or openly hostile,—public men are more afraid of the liquor interest than of their own consciences. And therefore it is that you must not be deceived, and must not talk as if the burden and heat of the day was not yet to come. You have got a contest before you which will need all your energy; all your fortitude; every weapon you may legitimately use; every sacrifice you have a right to make. The brewers and publicans are already alive, and are sparing no pains. When they find unlimited funds wherewith to protect their privilege of gathering into their own purses the little superfluities of the poor, the friends of temperance ought to meet them with money and time poured forth with a prodigality worthy of a noble creed. Mr. Bass told the world that for every pound put down by the Alliance he and his friends would put down a hundred; but it does not need the free-trade struggle to convince us that money subscribed in a good cause goes a great deal more than a hundred times as far as money subscribed in a bad one. The next election will try the hearts of your sixty thousand Good Templars. We shall need every man of them, and as many again, for,

“Many a banner will be torn,
 And many a knight to earth be borne,
 And many a sheaf of arrows spent,
 Ere Scotland's cause shall cross the Trent.”

That very Trent behind which Mr. Bass stands making speeches of a nature which almost lead one to believe that he is one of those paid agents of the Alliance against whom he so bitterly inveighs.

But we have more pressing business on our hands than to spend time on the confutation of poor Mr. Bass. We will leave him to his old friend and ally, the *Scotsman*, which, in the course of the last fortnight, demolished most triumphantly and most logically his claim to vested rights on behalf of the publicans in an article which, when Mr. Bass read, he must have felt inclined to exclaim, with the dying Cæsar, "Et tu, Brute!" To argue with Mr. Bass against the importance of the element beer to human society would be as idle as to endeavour to persuade the shoemaker of fable that some fallacy possibly lurked in his immortal dictum that there was nothing like leather. It will be better worth our while to defend ourselves against the charges of seeking to break up the Liberal party in pursuit of a chimera. The *Scotsman* bids us consider that "there are other things in the world requiring attention besides the liquor traffic—some things of greater urgency, if we will not admit them to be even of greater importance." How would the *Scotsman* define urgency? Probably something in this manner, though in more precise and trenchant words than any which I can command: the most urgent question of the day is that which unites in the highest degree these two requisites—that it should be ripe for decision, and that it should powerfully concern the interests of the community at large. What great matter is more pressing than the liquor traffic? What is riper for decision? The ballot? The ballot is a gone question. That fight is already won. Even on this platform I cannot forget that I am before everything a Liberal; and in that character I ask you what Government, what House of the Legislature, would at this hour of the day refuse us the ballot? And, that once gained, what stands between us and the liquor question? No one who watches the relations that now exist between the Liberal party and their leaders can imagine for a moment that we can expect from this Government any fresh legislation worth the name on ecclesiastical matters. Definite public opinion on the reform of the land, on the reform of the law, can hardly be said to have begun to exist. I suppose that if you started a league or an alliance for cheapening litigation, and cutting down the monstrous amount of public money which is now paid to the legal profession in proportion to the amount of public work done, you would not attract a thousand members, or a hundred pounds of annual subscriptions. For what other political object could you get subscriptions to a Guarantee Fund in at the rate of £14,000 a week during the last five weeks? Answer that,

and then we will admit that this is not the most urgent problem of the day. And, if it fulfils the conditions of urgency, does it fail in those of national importance? You may seek for a response to that question in the thirteen and a half millions of poor and police rates, the 140,000 criminals who fill our gaols, the 113 millions spent on liquor in the year, and the 131,000 convictions for drunkenness which are the result of that expenditure.

It is impossible for statesmen who really want to do some good in their generation, and not merely to trifle away their life over party and sectarian squabbles, to be blind to the fact that all our boasted education, sanitation, emigration, and every other receipt for making people happy and virtuous has ended in this, that the cost of pauperism in Scotland has risen 32 per cent in the course of ten years. The poor rates are the real indication of national misery and national prosperity. When you are accused of trying to impose abstinence on a minority, you may retort that the minority are imposing a poor rate on you, the majority; for the poor rates rise and fall with the number of public houses. The chairman of your own Parochial Board tells us how of the 2,700 paupers in a given year two-thirds were brought to poverty by their own intemperance, beside those who suffered from the intemperance of their parents, relations, and guardians; and this statement was confirmed by an ex-Lord Provost, and intensified by the inspector of the city parish. So it appears that in paying poor rates you are providing the pension list of those who are maimed and wounded in the battle of drunkenness. The rate-payer is retrospectively supporting the public houses; and not only retrospectively, because a large proportion of the money paid in out-door relief goes into the publican's till. Dr. Begg tells us that "the whiskey shops flourish with increased energy on the pay-days of the Board." Mr. Maclure, of the Glasgow city parish, says "a spirit dealer in High-street informs me that he draws ten pounds more on the pay-days of the Glasgow poor than on any other day of the week." In London an organisation has been established by which the giving of indiscriminate charity has been checked, and, at the same time, the system of giving out-door relief has been considerably restricted. What is the result? In the East End of London publicans cannot pay their way, owing to the decrease in the number of paupers who have parish silver in their pocket, and to the manner in which swindling beggars have been unmasked and exposed. A relieving officer in that neighbourhood, suspecting where the money went, marked a number of shillings and half-crowns destined for out-door relief. In the afternoon of the pay-day he went across to the public house, had a £5 note changed, and got back two-thirds of his shillings and

half-crowns.* In a city where people are so determined not to pay church rates against their convictions, I should not wonder if before long the temperance people will be getting themselves roused for refusing to pay the poor-rate, when they find out that it goes into the pockets of the publicans.

In regard to the accusation of breaking up the Liberal party by making this a test question, who, I may ask, blames the Anti-Corn Law League, now that the great contest is a thing of the past, for having made free trade a test question at elections? And yet the importance of the liquor traffic and the corn duty hardly bear comparison, with reference to their effect on the public comfort and welfare. In the year 1840, before free-trade, 3,750,000 quarters of wheat, oats, and barley, or their equivalent in flour, were imported. In 1850, with free-trade in full, or nearly full, swing, 7,500,000 quarters were imported. What is this gain of three and three-quarter millions of quarters compared to the loss of 70,000,000 bushels or their equivalent, which the liquor trade annually withdraws from the food of the people? It has been calculated that to cart away the loaves wasted in this manner, you would every working day require to drive off between seven and eight thousand cart loads. Imagine such a procession going each morning down to Leith breakwater, and the contents emptied into the sea! Why, there would be a revolution before two days were over. The amount of duty levied on corn and flour in the year 1840, during the existence of the Corn Laws, did not much exceed £1,100,000—or about one hundredth part of what the liquor interest levies from the public in order to maintain its country-houses, its hunters, its Highland shootings, and its subscriptions to the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel. Surely this is a matter on which a man may cheerfully stake the political fortunes of his party and of himself; knowing that the party and the individual will issue from the conflict purified and strengthened for good. The *Scotsman* warns me that my constituents may visit upon me at the next election the part I am taking in this movement. I do not complain of the warning. It is delivered in terms that are not in the least offensive, and it arises naturally from the course and com-

* Canon Kingsley "cited a village which he had known for thirty years, containing 800 inhabitants, so comfortably off that, with prudence, all the labourers might save money. But the rates were 3s. 6d. in the pound, and £200 was subscribed in charity, simply from the fact that the labourers spent their earnings in eight or nine beer-shops or tippling-houses, which the competition of three or four brewers had inflicted on the village. In those shops men and women sat drinking away their wages, which went into the pockets of the brewers, the poor rates and charitable subscriptions being merely rates in aid of the wages so spent. He believed that if all charities "struck" in rural districts, and gave nothing except in extreme cases, it would shut up public-houses by the dozen."

plexion of the article in which it occurs. The *Scotsman* writes:—“Mr. Trevelyan must know that there is a tendency amongst men, and not least among Borderers, to mete with such measure as has been meted; and that, besides the publicans, there are a great many people—we should say a very large majority—in those Border burghs, who do not hold the views of which Mr. Trevelyan is so new and so fierce an advocate. Suppose those people choose to act on the advice which Mr. Trevelyan gives to the other side, what chance would he have at the next election?” Well, Mr. Chairman, if such a fate did befall me, I could not more honourably lose a seat which was honourably won. But I do not think that the majority of the electors of the Border burghs will bear very hard upon me because I have been a little over earnest in claiming for that majority the right of settling for themselves whether or not they will have liquor-shops in their streets. If they had wanted somebody who would make a plaything of politics, they would never have taken me at the election of 1868. The electors of the Border burghs have known for three years past that my opinion was favourable to the Permissive Bill, and they have known likewise that I do not hold my opinions as agreeable exercise for intellectual speculation,—still less, I hope, as a means of rising in the world,—but as articles of living faith which I am bound by obligations higher than any we can owe to man to do my best to embody in practice. To get that done which he believes to be right, is an end and aim over which no public man should scruple to spend prospects, health, comfort, and leisure, knowing that our best is but little, and that to all of us, whether young or old, that night cometh in which no man can work. As I entered your city this afternoon I saw from the railway that cemetery in which stands the tomb of that eminent writer who was the great assertor of kingly right, and, close by, the obelisk under which lie buried those brave men who gave up their liberty, their country, and, in the end, their life, in order that we might be able to say the word that is in us. And I thought, when I saw those who in their lifetime held such different opinions sleeping side by side, how very little, twenty or thirty years hence, it would matter what sort of speeches we made, what places we held, what little paltry triumph we gained over our political opponents; but how very much it would matter that we had tried to do something to make our fellow-citizens happier and better.

It is not we who are forcing this question on the party. The most selfish and cautious of politicians cannot long stand aloof. It is evident from all that is passing that the publicans have made up their minds to fight it out. Already every election for Parliament, and Town Council, is becoming a battle-ground for the liquor interest. It is written, and the writing cannot be erased, that,

just as the Republicans in America drifted into being Abolitionists, so the Liberal party of this country, in spite of its antecedents, in spite of its fancied interests, in spite of itself, must ere long become a temperance party. We may accept the situation with dignity. We may be forced into it with ignominy. But whichever attitude we prefer, to that complexion we must come at last. And we, as Liberals, entertain no fears as to the consequences of the change which we feel to be impending. We cannot condescend to court and flatter an interest which we believe, not from the character of the men who exercise the trade, but from the very nature of it, to be profoundly immoral, for the sake of keeping office for another year, or of carrying some slight relaxation of ecclesiastical or political restrictions. We cannot acquiesce in wrong that right may come. We care little for satire or invective, or for the alienation of friends or the declamation of foes. We are content to know that if this counsel or this work be of men it will come to nought ; but if it be of God, no human power can overthrow or hinder it. And, knowing this, we urge you to continue in the course you have adopted—

“ With good

Still overcoming evil, and by small

Accomplishing great things ; by things deemed weak,

Subverting worldly strong and worldly wise.”

Yet another long unbroken unflagging effort—be it for one year, three, or five—and the assertion of that mighty principle, the majesty of the people’s will, which has already stormed so many strongholds of injustice, oppression, and privilege, will carry you triumphantly over the walls of the citadel, within which is encamped the most rapacious of the people’s plunderers and the subtlest of their foes.

SPEECH DELIVERED AT LIVERPOOL,
IN THE PHILHARMONIC HALL,

DECEMBER 6TH, 1871,

GEORGE MELLE, ESQ., M.P., IN THE CHAIR.

Mr. Chairman,—A stranger may well feel bashful when he comes forward to give his opinions on the question which has brought us here to-night in a town which may be said to be the head-quarters of theory in all matters relating to the liquor traffic. But, on the other hand, a speaker who holds that he is bound to utter from the platform what he believes to be the truth, under precisely the same penalties which bind the preacher on a Sunday, can never be a stranger in the presence of an audience which attends, not for the purpose of having their ears tickled or their fancy pleased, but with the object of holding solemn conference as to the method of obtaining practical measures which shall diminish the suffering and increase the virtue of the mass of their fellow-citizens. And, though Liverpool may boast itself of being the head-quarters of theory in this matter, at the same time the unimpeachable testimony of its statistics of crime, pauperism, and ignorance prove it to be equally the head-quarters of a varied and direful experience. When, driving through your streets, we see the long, almost unbroken, succession of public houses, and beershops, and wine vaults, and spirit dealers, and licensed grocers, and licensed confectioners, and drink-shops under more or less specious names, telling a tale of misery and sin which he that rides may read; and then, when we learn from the columns of the *Mercury* of November 21 how a meeting of persons “in favour of a bill for amending the laws regulating the sale of exciseable liquors” would not even entertain the notion of reducing these existing places of debauchery; who can blame Sir Wilfrid Lawson and myself, if we come before you in the character of men who know exactly what we want, and are determined that neither party ties, nor private interest, shall, as far as we are concerned, stand in the way of our getting it? Is that your opinion? Are you prepared to say that, though you

love your party much, you love your country more? If you are Liberals, will you have anything to do with a candidate whose liberalism is not robust enough to induce him to entrust to the majority of the householders a power which he is ready to leave with the owner of the land? If you are Conservatives, will you have anything to do with a representative who dares not deal with the anarchy of vice and beggary, not because he approves of it in his heart, but because he trembles in his shoes before the most dangerous of socialists, the liquor seller, who thrives on the plunder, not of the rich and titled, but of the lowly, the industrious, and the poor. It is bad that men should be slain by drink in numbers which dwarf into insignificance the lists of killed at such battles as Gravelotte and Waterloo. It is bad that husbands should beat their wives to death while under the influence of liquor, and that mothers should allow their little ones to perish of cold and neglect, while they are travelling to and fro between the pawnbroker's and the gin shop. But it is worse still, because it is a more wide-spread evil, that, in order to support the unnatural luxury of life enjoyed by a few hundred manufacturers of drink, millions of householders should be deprived of that margin of income, the right expenditure of which goes to render human existence delicate and desirable. In order that pictures by Landseer and Millais may hang in the drawing room and gallery of a great distiller the walls of a thousand cottages are stripped of those works of art which, humble and cheap as they are, still lend some sense of what is refined and beautiful to those who in the course of their daily labour meet with little that is pleasant to the eye. In order that a brewer's son may have five hundred a year to spend over his wine parties and hunters at Christ Church, a hundred children are robbed of the education which is the choicest portion which, rich or poor, a father can confer upon his offspring. In a report to the Council of the Society of Arts upon the condition of education in Richmond, Mortlake, and Twickenham, it is stated that, while every family in the district spends on drink something over four shillings a week, it spends on schooling something over twopence. Within a given square mile at the East End of London, between four and five hundred thousand a year is spent on drink; a sum forty or fifty times as large as would be required to defray the school fees for the children of the same locality. And, with all this before their knowledge, is it not astonishing that these persons "in favour of a bill for amending the laws regulating the sale of excisable liquors" should wish to keep the responsibility of licensing in the hands where it lies at this moment? In the Midland Counties 2,530 liquor shops were convicted of various offences, more than 18,000 persons were proceeded against for being drunk

and disorderly, and only 41 licences were withdrawn. Among 1,516 beershops only one licence was withdrawn. In Warwick, for 38 persons convicted in 1866 only one publican was punished. In Birmingham, out of 1,992 licenced houses, proceedings were taken in the course of six years in 3,241 cases against disorderly houses, and against more than 8,000 disorderly persons, and only one licence was withdrawn. Who can wonder that, at Birmingham, out of 64,000 children, less than half attend school, when there is one drunken case to every group of eight children? Who can wonder that at our meeting in that town, (held the day after your fellow citizens assembled to express their confidence in the licensing bench as a whole), magistrate after magistrate rose to confess, in his individual capacity, that their administration of the law had been a failure, and to pray that the responsibility might be removed from themselves and given to the ratepayers? Compare the shameful leniency which these figures indicate with the prompt and ample retribution which is dealt out to a labourer who is detected with a hare in his pocket, or a brace of pheasants under the boards of his cottage floor. You can trust the magistrates to deal with the poacher. The amount of our poor rates, our police rates, our expenditure on criminal justice, and of our national liquor bill, shows that they are not so strong-handed and so impartial that we can trust them to deal with the publican.

And then the chairman of that meeting objects to Mr. Matheson's saying that parties interested in the trade sat on the bench. He says: "Any magistrate interested in the trade would not be allowed to vote at a licensing session." Truly an admirable chairman for such a company of optimists! What does it signify whether or not a magistrate who is a brewer ostentatiously withdraws when the licence of one of his tenants is under consideration, seeing that he leaves behind his cronies, who interchange with him dinners and battues, and are closely connected with him by the sympathy which unites men of the same order, interests, and habits of thought? One magistrate draws his highest rent from hops; the best tenant of another is a malt-growing farmer; a third has half-a-dozen public-houses of his own, and on the simplest principles of mutual service is not likely to bear hard on his colleague. And, knowing what human and magisterial nature is, are we unwilling to hand to the majority of our citizens a power which is legally held, though, I admit, very rarely put in force, by every Justice Shallow in the fifty-two shires? Even those who maintain that this power, though legally held, is not virtually exercised by the justices of the peace, cannot deny that it is possessed beyond dispute or limit by the landlord of the neighbourhood. If it is just that Earl Derby, or any other earl, baron, baronet, or squire should ordain that he will have no public-

house on his property, it must be right for the majority of the inhabitants to have the power of ordaining it too. But if it is unjust and tyrannical for Earl Derby to have this power, then, in the name of all that is equitable, let a law be passed enacting that, when the owner of the soil has refused a lease for a public-house, a majority of the inhabitants may upset his decision. The *Times* newspaper, which, right or wrong, is seldom weak or inconsequent, expressly advocates a somewhat kindred policy. It says, "It is fairly within the competence of the Legislature to enact a maximum proportion of the number of public-houses to the inhabitants of a district; but it would be right that, concurrently with this restriction, there should be some provision conceding the privilege of opening public-houses where the existing number falls below a certain minimum, or where the nearest house of this character is not within a given distance." But the majority of our opponents are less thorough and severe reasoners. They no more venture to support such a measure than they dare propose to confer on a majority of farmers, who are afraid of education having the effect of raising wages, the power of shutting up a village school. Let them, then, be logical and pass our Permissive Bill.

The *Times* has lately made another observation of importance with regard to the Alliance. "Here," it says, "are a number of people of all ranks and classes organising a vast agitation, with an enormous fund, for the mere sake of doing, by Act of Parliament, what any man of them, and any man of those for whose interests they are solicitous, might do of his mere motion at any moment of his life." This is an argument which ignores the very nature of strong liquor; which cuts at the root not only of the Permissive Bill, but of all interference whatever with the traffic. The answer to this theory lies in one fact. New Jersey is a State which swarms with teetotallers. A prohibitory law has come within one vote of passing the State Assembly. If personal abstinence, and a strong feeling in favour of abstinence, was as efficacious as legal enactment, New Jersey would be hardly less sober than Maine. But, as it is, while the revenue in 1870 drawn from liquor by the Federal Government in Maine only amounted to 27,000 dollars, in New Jersey a hardly larger population contributed 593,000 dollars. The difference between law and no law is as the difference between one and twenty.

If legal enactments were not a potent check on drinking, the 38th anniversary of the Licensed Victuallers Protection Society (for which, at this moment, according to advertisement, numerous trains are taking the guests to and from the Crystal Palace), would be a very tame affair compared with what it is likely to be at a time when the licensed victuallers are in such an unprecedented state of agitation. They, at any rate, know what they are about.

They are not afraid of breaking up parties. Every election,—such is the fiat pronounced by those who rule the counsels of the liquor interest,—is to turn exclusively on the drink question. At every municipal and parliamentary contest the liquor sellers gather themselves into a solid and formidable phalanx. Religious and political differences are thrust into a corner. Voters are deluged with beer, and candidates with pledges to hurl into perdition any Government which shall dare to lay a finger on the sacred palladium of drink. Adulteration is one test question. Inspection is another. It will soon be as perilous in England to meddle with the secrets of the liquor traffic as it was in Greece to pry into the mysteries of Bacchus. But, in the long run, nothing will come of all this intriguing and coercing. No man worth his salt was ever frightened by being dubbed fanatic or hypocrite by an interest whose very violence shows that in its heart it believes itself to be adverse to the general interests of the nation. We are case-hardened to these epithets. This is not the first time that—you as an audience, and I as a speaker—we have taken part in a common attack upon a traffic in something which ought never to have been bought and sold. It is for you to see that, amidst all the coming storm of threats, and big words, and deputations of publicans crowding the lobbies of the House of Commons, and petitions signed by their dupes on a thousand bars wet with the drink which has purchased those very signatures, your representatives quit themselves like men.

Some people think that it will be hard for the temperance party of this country to steer safely in the coming session. My own experience of parliamentary life is that honest men have never much difficulty in detecting an honest measure. If the Government bring in a bill which shall largely diminish the existing number of public-houses, and cut down the expenditure on liquor from 110 millions a year to 60 or 70 millions; and if this bill is to come into operation within the next twelve months, without giving the publicans a ten years monopoly, to be indefinitely prolonged at the end of that time by a nation which, ere the term has elapsed, they will have permanently debauched—in that case every true temperance man will do his best to see the Government safe through the battle. But if we are to be put off with stricter police regulations, and ordinances about adulteration, I think we may leave the ministers and the publicans to settle their affairs between them. And remember this, that every step we make brings us nearer ultimate success. Sunday closing, rigid inspection, early hours, limit to the number of public-houses—each and every move in the right direction, instead of cooling or detaching our friends, only increases their number and their ardour. The less men drink, the less they want to drink.

Whence does our best vote come? From that Irish province where, owing to the good sense and public spirit of the magistrates, prohibition exists in everything but in name. The duty of our party is rendered very plain by the certainty that every gain bears fruitful interest. The motto which describes our progress, not only as we wish it to be, but as it is, has long been "vestigia nulla retrorsum."

On learning the result of the Plymouth contest, the *Times*, in an agony of not ungenerous party feeling, called on the Government to settle the question, in the interest, not of the nation, not of the wives and children of the drunkard, not of humanity and religion, but of Liberal candidates at the next general election. Settle the question! You will never settle the question as long as there is a drunkard in the country. I earnestly hope that the Government will give us an effective and beneficent measure, which will form the first milestone on the road of progress. But it will be a milestone, and not a goal. The Temperance party have proved that they are not among those whom partial success can satisfy, who are content to sit down and enjoy what is won while there is still work left for them to do. In Canada, in New England, in whatever part of the globe the Anglo-Saxon tongue is spoken, they have shown that—even though they may be as fanatical, one-ideal, and impracticable as all men who have ever effected anything worth effecting in this world—at any rate this one thing they do, forgetting those things that are behind, and reaching forth unto those things that are before, they press towards the mark for the prize of their high calling. Tasks of real moment are accomplished, not by those who can best work, but by those who can work, and who can wait, too.

"He is the hero who, whate'er betide,
Endures to bide his time,
Still patient in his simple faith sublime
Till the wise years decide."

That decision, we confidently assert, will be in favour of us and our cause. The Master of this universe has not made man in His own image that he should for ever be the slave of debauchery, selfishness, and sin; and, as in a thousand conflicts of right against wrong He has made the weak things of the world to confound the wise; as He has successively strengthened the hands of those who freed the negro, who enfranchised the citizen, who gave bread to the poor, and the right of worship to the persecuted; so, in the contest which is now impending, He will not fail those who dare to face labour and misrepresentation in behalf of the victims and bondsmen of the most potent and deadly system of tyranny and spoliation that ever afflicted an earth created for a better fate.

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